

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

nuptials ; thou wilt fare thither bathed in the sweet blood of the Son of God, with the sweet name of Jesus, which I wish may never leave thy memory, and I shall be waiting for thee at the place of execution.' Now think, father and son, how his heart lost all fear, and his face was transformed from sadness to joy, and he rejoiced, exulted, and said : 'Whence conies such grace to me, that the sweetness of my soul should await me at the holy place of execution ?' See, he had reached such light that he called the place of execution *holy*, and he said : ° I shall go all joyous and strong, and it will seem to me a thousand years till I come thither, when I think that you are awaiting me there'; and he spoke so sweetly of God's goodness, that one might scarce sustain it. I awaited him, then, at the place of execution ; and I stayed there, waiting, with continual prayer, in the presence of Mary and of Catherine, Virgin and Martyr. But, before he arrived, I placed myself down, and stretched out my neck on the block ; but nothing was done to me, for I was full of love of myself; then I prayed and insisted, and said to Mary that I wished for this grace, that she would give him true light and peace of heart at that moment, and then that I might see him return to his end. Then was my soul so full that, albeit a multitude of the people was there, I could not see a creature, by reason of the sweet promise made me. Then he came, like a meek lamb, and, seeing me, he began to laugh, and he would have me make the sign of the Cross over him ; and, when he had received the sign, I said: * Down! to the nuptials, sweet brother mine, for soon shalt thou be in eternal life.' He placed himself down with great meekness, and I stretched out his neck, and bent down over him, and reminded him of the blood of the Lamb. His mouth said nought save *Jesus* and *Catherine*; and, as he spoke thus, I received his head into my hands, closing my eyes in the Divine Goodness, and saying : *I will*"

Then to her ecstatic gaze the heavens seemed to open, and she saw the God made Man, in brightness like the sun, receive the victim's blood into His own open wounds, his desire into the fire of His divine charity, blood into blood, flame into flame, and